

INYO'S (VERY) "GENERAL PLAN"

BENETT KESSLER

CONSIDERED NOW TO BE "GROSSLY INADEQUATE" FOR PRESENT NEEDS, THE INYO "GENERAL PLAN" IS UNDER HARSH CRITICISM, BUT FORESIGHT AND THOUGHTFUL REVISION MAY TURN IT INTO A POWERFUL TOOL TO SOLVE SOME CURRENT PROBLEMS AND TO AID FUTURE GROWTH OF THE COUNTY.

So broad, in fact so "general," and so much needed at a time when it is found to be so spinelessly vague, Inyo County's "General Plan" has become for the county administration more of a hindrance than a help. What few guidelines that exist in the plan are often easily amended, or simply over-ridden when various departments of the county find such action expedient.

Going further, the General Plan is open to easy interpretation and the limits it sets are very often a source of embarrassment for a county which now, more than ever, needs clear direction to solve a number of chronic ills.

Since 1970 a major concern of county officials has been the water controversy. And from each side of the battle lines come as many different views as there are people to interpret what the General Plan actually says; what, for instance, is the real meaning of its references to water use and control of water resources?

The General Plan of course covers far more territory than the matter of Inyo's water. And whatever emerges, finally, from the administration's current hopes of revising the plan will affect - probably - the lives of every resident of Inyo County, and many beyond.

But the water issue, taken alone, provides a fair example of the inadequacies of the plan and shows many of its weaknesses.

For instance, here's what DWP Official Jim Wickser reads in the General Plan: "The Inyo County General Plan advocates groundwater pumping. And now the county officials are embarrassed by it." And some county officials are not in disagreement with Wickser, on that, at least. They say that neglect in changing the 10-year-old plan has been a "blundering over-"
(See GENERAL PLAN, Page 5)

The COURTS

A CHANGE OF VENUE BRINGS DWP'S DAMAGE SUIT TO INYO

The Department of Water and Power lawsuit which holds the county government in part responsible for the 1976 aqueduct explosion, will be fought out on home grounds.

A Los Angeles law firm representing the county's insurance company has managed to get a change of venue from the Los Angeles court where the suit was filed, to the court here.

The insurance company, Fireman's Fund, took over the issue as Inyo County's insurer, and Firemen's lawyers, the firm of Haight, Dixon, Brown, Bonesteele & Rigg, will take over the question of whether the county will pay more than \$100,000 sought in the DWP suit.

April Haskell, a member of the law firm, told NEWS-LETTER last week that no date has been set for a hearing on the case. And at Independence a deputy district attorney, Greg James, said it could "take some time" to get the case moving.

The fact that a co-defendant - the youth convicted of participation in the explosion - is a resident of Lone Pine, was thought to have added some weight with the court in its decision in favor of the change of venue.

Still another attorney, one from Reno, may represent the county when the case is opened here.

The INYO COUNTY NEWS-LETTER

A NEWS ALTERNATIVE - EASTERN SIERRA NEWS SERVICE

Compiled by John Heston and Bennett Kessler

LIMITED CIRCULATION
Published weekly

Week of
Nov. 14, 1977

KID CRIME

NO EASY SOLUTIONS, BUT SOME
PROGRAMS SEEM TO BE WORKING

An attack by a teen-ager on an 80-year-old woman walking on a Bishop street, the first incident of its kind "in several years," has refocused some public attention on juvenile crime.

"Attention," however has not yet in any real way provided "solutions."

County officials and law enforcement agencies - and an increasingly concerned public - are intensely aware of the problem, but they are not always in agreement on its causes, or its cure. In that, they share the frustrations of the entire country.

Very often, the suggested solutions and the facile explanations of causes follow along lines of either "liberal" or "conservative" thinking, although few see youth crime as a political issue. Generational divisions in the populace also offer highly polarized "solutions," with the older "conservative" thinking tending more to restrictive "rules" and harsher punitive measures for what to them are "rebellious" young people; On the younger "liberal" side stand those offering many of the knee-jerk solutions dating back to Dr. Spock's "self-expression" formula that even Spock himself has retracted.

In Inyo County, the man stuck in the middle of the problem and wedged between the two philosophies is Probation Officer John Lee. It is his belief that the root cause of juvenile crime lies with "the family," and in that belief he shares the feelings of many of the older, or "conservative" establishment.

Lee believes, and offers considerable evidence to support his view, that it is in the home environment, or lack of it, "that everything starts and stops." Unexplained, however, are those cases of "good families" that produce children that get into sometimes serious trouble - or the close families in which a brother or sister "goes bad" while the other children remain paragons of acceptable Christian ethic virtue.

Social planners blame the ghettos, poverty, racism, joblessness, but few people who live in those conditions (Very few social planners do) will agree with that idea, except sometimes as an excuse.

Whatever the causes, their effects are frighteningly clear: (See YOUTH CRIME, Page 4)

» » » » NOTES FROM B.K. « « «

BENETT KESSLER



THE NEWS-LETTER SUBSCRIBER who asked, jokingly, to have his copy mailed in a "plain brown wrapper" was itemed here some time back and his initials were listed as "J.W." The item caused a lot of comment since a lot of people thought - and are still convinced - that "J.W." is DWP's Jim Wickser. Not so. When Wickser was asked if he wanted the NEWS-LETTER he flatly said no and that he "finds nothing of interest in it," and "Who wants week-old news?" Anyhow, thanks again to Subscriber "J.W."

ALTHOUGH THE ROCK 'N ROLL CROWD has taken over the place, Bishop's Whiskey Creek offers the best night entertainment around: a trio that calls itself "Goliath." If you're into dancing, you'll probably like Organist Dave Ibarra, his singer-wife Lizz Ibarra, and Drummer Ross Chapotom. They've been there for weeks and have two more to go.

WE READ WHERE THE CONGRESSMAN is leaving for the Mid-East to "become, and remain, personally acquainted with the...problems and demands of those countries." On his itinerary: Egypt and Israel, and "the African Continent." Also on the junket schedule: Iran, which remains the world's largest single repository of oil reserves. Congressman Ketchum's name has long been associated with "Big Oil," and there were some rumors (unverified, but also undenied) that he was looking into some oil matters. Among the congressman's campaign donors are a few of the biggest names in the oil industry, with home addresses in Houston's fashionable River Oaks section. Among contributors: Harry H. Cullen of Houston. In Houston, the name Cullen is like the name Rockefeller in New York, or Chandler or Mulholland in L.A. The congressman is a staunch supporter of de-control of oil prices, and a strong opponent of much of the proposed Carter energy plan. He is a member of the House ways and means committee.

WORST PUBLIC RELATIONS STATEMENT OF THE WEEK: That of a peace officer, more than a little in his cups, boasting among a crowd of people that his agency "doesn't give the press even half of what's going on and what's happening," and threatening "to break (a reporter's) neck." His views come as no news to most of the local press. Oh well, "In Vino Veritas."

AND, NO THEY'RE NOT ALL THAT WAY.

REMEMBER BECKY WINFREE, the Lone Pine girl with the beautiful voice? She's now Mrs. Boatwright, living in San Francisco. (Married in Alaska a year ago.) She's a mother now, as of Nov. 9. A girl, 9-pounds. Good news.

AND WITH THAT, our hope that..the news in your day...will be good news..every day.

Sincerely,

KERN RIVER FISH STORY

TO KILL THE BROWN TROUT, THE FISH & GAME DEPARTMENT POISONS THE UPPER KERN RIVER

For California's embattled Fish and Game Department, already caught in the cross-fire of the Tule Elk issue, a new controversy has floated like dead and smelly fish to the surface of public attention.

Some of the state's naturalists and ecologists remain deaf to F&G's feverish explanations about why the department is systematically poisoning the upper regions of the Kern River South Fork. The poisoning program broke into light last week from the pages of NEW WEST Magazine. At least one department spokesman called NEW WEST's article "muckraking."

"Muckraking" or not, the story revealed that the banks of the Kern are literally lined with the carcasses of "hundreds" of fish - German Brown Trout and also California Golden Trout. The situation is raising not only a riverside smell, but also a lot of questions.

In Inyo County, a fish and game representative, Phil Pister, explained it this way: "If we don't wipe out the Brown Trout, they'll wipe out the Golden Trout. The Golden Trout is the California State Fish. The Browns are from Europe."

Pister offered this example: "It's what happens when a native population is invaded

(See FISH, Page 7.)

JAIL EXPANSION

STILL NOT A PLACE YOU'D WANT TO SPEND THE NIGHT, BUT NEW CONSTRUCTION WILL BRING IT UP TO RIGID STATE STANDARDS

California counties are hard-pressed to keep abreast of the state's quick-change policies and standards in jail construction, and until now at least, the Inyo jail at Independence has gotten by "on variance" allowances.

Since he was elected to office in 1970, Inyo Sheriff Floyd Barton has sought by whatever methods possible the expansion of the jail - just to keep up with new standards, if not to ease a general overcrowding.

An early appeal for a bond issue was voted down and since then Barton has tried several plans for improvements. After moving tediously through bureaucratic entanglements, he finally managed to get \$580,000 for the improvements needed to satisfy both the local demand for space and also state standards. The federal funds he finally acquired will finance 90% of the cost of the local project, which got underway last week.

"It's not impossible to keep up with the constant changes," said the sheriff, "but it is annoying." He went on to explain how changing "philosophies" demand changes in standards of construction. "Fifteen years ago, it was...improper to isolate a prisoner. Everybody was in one big room. Now, that philosophy has changed and privacy is the theory."

In Inyo County, the state theory is one difficult to implement. In a year the Independence jail is full to 80% of capacity, and if more than 30-32 prisoners are jailed "we bunk

(See JAIL, Page 4)

AFTER THE AXE FALLS

KELLEY'S RESIGNATION SPAWNS NEW PROBLEMS

The resignation of the county veterans service officer has left the supervisors casting around hoping to find a veterans office system acceptable to at least somebody, but the county administrator says he hopes there will be "no major changes" in the office.

The Kelley battle has spawned a number of side-issues - some of them red herrings - that the supervisors are still haggling over; like the question of a "county counsel" for the supervisors. But the chief aim of the administration seems now to be ridding themselves of the harsh criticism hurled

at them by some of the county veterans groups in the past four hectic months. The vets had demanded Kelley's dismissal from the office he had held for 10 years or more - as had an exhaustive grand jury recommendation.

Ironically enough, as the Kelley issue was resolved, the veterans office itself appeared to be "functioning better than ever." Kelley remains at the head



JIM KELLEY
"efficiency that
came too late.."

of that office until Nov. 30, the effective date of his resignation. County Administrator John K. Smith said that Kelley is now aware of the problems at the office and has readily set about solving them. "The controversy," said the administrator, "has perked up the whole office."

As for the charges that Smith and the supervisors "took too long" to reach their decision on Kelley, the administrator said he doesn't think so. He said the Kelley issue is "something to be accomplished objectively, without emotion or haphazard procedures." Angry veterans, some of whom reportedly lost several hundred dollars in VA benefits because of errors in the county office procedure, had snapped eagerly at Kelley's heels and then, not getting the immediate action they wanted, turned the pack on the trail of the supervisors, accusing them of procrastinating, and of "personal involvement" with Kelley that prevented them from firing him.

Smith admitted that Kelley had very early offered a letter of resignation - right after the grand jury report - but that he had declined to accept it telling Kelley "nothing was sure yet." Smith explained that he "does not work that way. I do not accept resignations under pressure. We needed a good factual basis first."

Kelley at no time had been accused of personal wrongdoing, but his office procedures apparently had cost some county veterans several hundred dollars, usually in cases where applications had been filed past deadline.

During the veterans-supervisors fight, the supervisors had further angered the vets with the suggestion that the veterans service office might be closed. That suggestion was hurriedly dropped after the board felt the sting and the angry reaction of the then-unified veterans groups in the county.

Next step for the supervisors will be Smith's recommendation this week that the of-

VETS OFFICE: VULNERABILITY AND "HEADACHES"

Whoever moves into the seat vacated by Jim Kelley will be taking on some headaches that to some would make the position more of a liability than a personal asset. In the first place, it is not a "power spot" in the county's government. Those who serve there - even those who serve "well" - are not in a position to graduate into larger areas of county authority. It is a little-publicized office of red tape and paperwork. (It was, after all, the arbitrarily-set deadlines of state and federal bureaucracy that helped to do in Kelley.)

And it is an office highly vulnerable to the criticisms of those it serves - the veterans and the closely-knit organizations that back them, and which have political clout far beyond that justified by their numbers.

As one county official said, "The veterans service officer is more vulnerable because he deals directly and personally with people's pocketbooks."

The supervisors' chairman, Herbert London, had intimated during the Kelley investigation that he had "charges brought to me on two other department heads." Asked about that, he said, "I'd rather not say. I don't know anybody who does his job that doesn't get charges brought against them." Concerning the two he mentioned, London said he won't be taking the matter to the grand jury "for now."

In a time of increasing "regulation" by government over personal lives, a county department head under fire from organized opposition stands little chance of surviving.

fice be continued "as is," and that the county start advertising for a new veterans officer.

Reading accurately the feelings of the local veterans, Smith may have understated it when he added, "I don't think the veterans will stand for anything less than a separate veterans service office."

...And a new veterans officer, however much the office is now improved.

Once the supervisors were convinced they'd have to accept the Kelley resignation, they made short work of the task to which they had shown distaste. His already-prepared letter of resignation was read, passed on unanimously, and the supervisors turned to other agenda business.

Kelley, who was present in the board room, watched quietly. When it was over, he got up and left the room without a word.

Kelley was not without a number - an increasing number, some say - of sympathizers. So ferocious had been the attacks on him, he was in the eyes of many the hard-pressed public servant "trying his best" under difficult circumstances. He returned to the office whose efficiency he had already upgraded during the long-fought battle - an efficiency, it seemed, that had come too late.

Why had he prolonged the agony until the end of November?

He said he wanted time to "follow through" on some appeals he had made in the interest of a number of veterans.

JAIL, Continued

them on the floor.

"The deputies," says Barton, "have to be on top of the situation."

As for the new expansion, Barton says it will bring the jail up-to-date at least for "five-to-seven years, until we are back where we are today." (Like military aircraft, it would seem, jails become obsolete by the time they're built.)

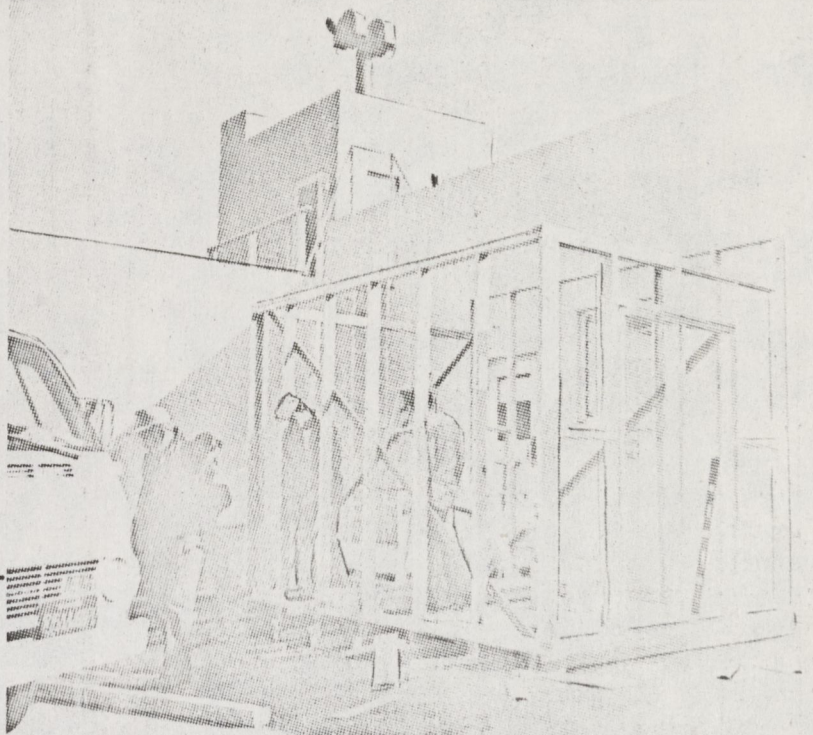
But "more room" is, as the sheriff says, "what the new jail is all about." He said the construction now underway is to allow for what he calls proper prisoner segregation - the separation of "problem" or "homosexual" inmates.

Originally, Barton's plan had included some remodeling of the present facility to provide room to separate adults from juveniles. But escalating costs ever since the project was estimated have precluded any such hopes; this at a time when juvenile crime is on the increase, and Inyo County has few facilities for juvenile detention. (See KID CRIME, this issue.)

The jail expansion will, however, provide eight new single cells and eight dormitory-type rooms, or room for about 16 more prisoners.

Barton says the expansion project will be completed sometime "near the end of March."

For now, it has the state's okay.



SMALL FRAMEWORK OF TWO-BY-FOURS marks beginning of new jail expansion. When complete, it will replace old storage room.

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YOUTH CRIME, Continued

In 1975, teen (up to 17) involvement in crime amounted to 85,418 cases of violence (murder, rape, assault, etc.) in the U.S.

In that same year youthful crimes involving property numbered 3/4 million cases.

In the schools (where some aim their accusations of break-down of discipline), no fewer than 70,000 teachers were assaulted.

In Inyo County, a few teachers have felt the vengeful anger of students, but usually, the youngsters take their frustrations out in malicious mischief, thefts, and a determined insistence on their "rights", whether it be a "right" to use drugs, or to drive at 85.

Thankfully, as Lee pointed out, the teen crime picture in Inyo is not so garishly painted as in the larger cities. "It is on a lower scale," said Lee. "Three years after the fact in other areas of the country, the problems catch up to us here. It's a creeping thing."

And a creepy thing, more often than not involving drugs. As Lee sees it, "The kids know more now, know what they can get away with in regard to the law."

For some teen-agers in Inyo County "knowing more now," was not enough and due primarily with their lack of expertise in crime, a great number were caught. Lee provided figures for three years, 1975, 76 and 77, and the numbers reflect the national increases, although to a lesser degree than in urban areas.

Lee's office handled 34 felony and misdemeanor cases that went to court in 1975. (This does not include the large number of those incidents in which no charges are officially filed and the suspect is given six months "to get

straight."

In 1976, the number of cases moved up to 49, and so far for 1977, 59 cases.

The figures for those "given a chance", and depending on whether there are any more violations, are 37, 24, and 27, respectively for the three years.

Lee said Inyo's young criminals engage in all the same crimes found in other areas, but that theft is by far the most common. There have been "some" cases of violence against another person, including fights and assaults. Although there have been a number of cases of "illegal intercourse" (statutory rape), there have been only "very few" cases of forcible rape. Murder has yet to appear on the books for the 1975-77 period.

Young criminals are considered by many law enforcement officers to be far "more dangerous" than their generational predecessors. Officers say they'd rather deal "any day" with the professionals in crime (who weigh and measure their odds) than with the neurotic egos that today ape television - and pull the trigger.

"Kids," say the cops, "are unpredictable and impulsive." Their lack of experience tells them that "now" is more important than "tomorrow," and gratification of personal needs (Read "wants") is based on their philosophy of instant everything. Television and movie violence offers them the know-how, and also the simplistic solutions they seek in a society growing ever more complex.

In Inyo County, what are the solutions - or even the stop-gap measures?

There are no easy ones, but more is being done than immediately meets the eye. A

(See back page)

GENERAL PLAN, Continued

sight"

A point of conflict with the Department of Water and Power is a section on "plants." Wickser says that part of the General Plan indicates that, in his words, "...water could be put to a more beneficial use than perpetuating some valley plants.

"And," emphasizes Wickser, "that's what our environmental impact report says, but since 1968 the county officials have changed their minds."

To say the least, they have. But they are still stuck with the General Plan.

When not embarrassed by the plan, some officials are angered by it. Planning Commissioner Pat Wiltsie is among those who think the GP has hurt Inyo in its dealings with the Department of Water and Power. She said the plan has been used "to discredit the county." Wickser's interpretation would support her view, and obviously many in Los Angeles would side with his interpretation.

It is Wiltsie's claim that DWP's own plan to get Inyo water is actually written into the present General Plan. Her claim is to some extent possible since DWP and its sympathizers played large roles in forming the plan when, by state demand, it was first hurriedly drawn up.

Inyo Planning Director Doug Sherburne is among those believing the GP now needs "drastic updating," but Sherburne says the DWP's water aims were not written into it. He points out a part which gives "some descriptive information" about the DWP water project.

Sherburne disagrees adamantly with Wickser in the matter of "advocating" groundwater pumping. "Many people read the plan," says Sherburne. "They get many different interpretations, but I think the protracted litigation makes it clear where the county stands on groundwater pumping. I would take on anyone who interprets the General Plan in specifics."

Specifics? That may be the problem; the GP is far too unspecific; the belief of many whose jobs demand constant referral to it. In the eyes of a growing number the plan - called by some "the Constitution of the county" - falls far short of protecting the integrity and growth of Inyo County.

Wiltsie candidly said "It's puffed wheat. I don't like it. It's an inadequate collection of statistics, just blown-up statistics." She points out that DWP executives played a part in putting it all together, and few deny that DWP is capable of turning up with convenient statistics whenever expediency demands. She said Duane Georgeson, a top DWP engineer, was "in on the 1968 plan." Wiltsie concludes by flatly stating that Inyo's GP damages everyone except the DWP and its goals.

In recent months the board of supervisors has shown a growing impatience to get the plan updated. In that they have placed their demands on the desk of Director Sherburne. He replies with the claim he lacks in his department the staff necessary to do the job. Supervisor Wilma Muth said she thinks Sherburne should have made the GP "a priority" when he first came to Inyo County two years ago, and she indicates she won't let the matter drop until "something" is done.

Her sense of urgency may not be entirely

unwarranted.

The State of California mandated the General Plan 10 years ago. At that time, the county administration turned to a private organization, Herman Ruth Associates, to draw up a plan that would satisfy the state.

Of that action one of the county's assistant district attorneys, Greg James now says: "As with any other new regulation, the counties sat back and took a wait-and-see attitude toward the significance of the General Plan mandate." But for some counties procrastination has brought them to trouble. The attorney general's office is now moving ahead with legal action to force them to meet state regulations. For instance in California's Butte County no building permits can now be issued until an acceptable General Plan is updated.

Can that happen in Inyo?

James says "This county and about 40 others in California are in bad shape. We could get sued and so could a lot of others.

"It would be a good idea," warns James, "to get something going." James added that if there is no update of the plan, there may not be any more local development.

All of which throws it back again to Planner Doug Sherburne. Sherburne says that at this time there is no one working on the GP, that he will have to have additional staff.

But Supervisor Muth said she, for one, is willing to have the county "contract out" to get Inyo's GP moving - and, further, to complete a plan for the City of Bishop. Other officials say they prefer hiring another full-time employee "or two" for the planning department.

The opinion of most remains, in so many words: -Get on with putting it in writing.

TESTIMONIAL

He delivered about 2500 of the valley's babies, treated infinite numbers of flu cases, and was in attendance to watch scores of his patients recover and live - or sadly see them die. No stereotype is Bishop's Dr. C.L. Scott, but he remains, black bag always at his side, one of the few remaining "country doctors" and "general practitioners."

After 40 years' practice in Inyo County, he'll receive the tributes of his friends at a testimonial dinner this Saturday. It will be "a Western affair," since the doctor is considered to be a "westerner" at heart, or a Sunday Cowboy, a Rexall Ranger, in the words of a friend helping to organize the dinner.

Now in his seventies, he maintains an interest in sports. A friend, Howard McAfee of Bishop, recalls the time the doctor saved a baseball player's eye: "A bat broke. Part of it hit a man in the eye, drove it back into his head. Scottie brought it back out and got him to the hospital."

Such accounts will probably make up a large part of Saturday's testimonials when a whole town - or at least a big part of it - turns out to pay its respects to "Scottie."

It was assumed that the dinner at the Charles Brown auditorium will not keep him away from a football game. The doctor still donates his time, from the sidelines, to valley football "in case anybody needs him."

PLANNERS' ISSUE

IN THEIR FIGHT WITH THE SUPERVISORS,
THE PLANNING COMMISSIONERS MAY BE
LOOKING TO SACRAMENTO FOR REINFORCEMENTS

Calling in reinforcements for its running skirmish with the board of supervisors, the Inyo County Planning Commission has turned to the state attorney general seeking an investigation of the Dean Knight "conflict of interest" controversy.

Although no member of the planning commission would confirm the report that the attorney general had been contacted, none would deny it.

Planning Commission Chairman Glenn Meyer was sought out for confirmation, and would say only, "No comment." Pressed for an explanation, he said, "I have not contacted them in any degree," but when he was asked if any other of the commissioners had brought up the supervisors controversy with the attorney general, Meyer replied, "I'll have to go back to my original statement - no comment."

Late Thursday, a usually reliable Bishop source said that the commissioners are "hanging in there" in their battle with the supervisors, and that the commissioners want the attorney general to investigate the Dean Knight issue.

Other planning commissioners were asked to elaborate on the report. One of these, Bob Dinsmore, echoed Meyer's words. "I haven't any comment...I don't know...We have been conferring with the district attorney." But after a pause, Dinsmore went on: "Regardless of the attorney general, the DA, or anything else, our resolution is how we feel. We want it known we're not backing up an inch. There is no animosity. We feel we did the right thing."

The "right thing" Dinsmore referred to is the resolution recently passed by the commissioners in which they charged the supervisors, or some of them, with "conflict of interest" in their dealings with the Knight mobile home development near Big Pine. The supervisors had voted to over-ride decisions of the planning commissioners in their okay of the development's plans.

Although in their resolution the commissioners fell short of direct accusations of any supervisors, Meyer said "It's all there if anybody cares to take a look." At least one other county official, the assistant public works director, said he thought the commissioners were talking about him "and Supervisor Wilma Muth," but the assistant director, Roger Glidden, denied any wrongdoing or any interest in the Knight development. He confirmed reports that Knight is building a house for him, however.

Commissioner Pat Wiltsie, asked about the attorney general report, replied coolly: "I don't believe you'll find anything about that on the public record," but when asked if anything off the public record had occurred, she replied, "If anything like that happened, I don't believe you would be informed of it. No comment."

Still another commissioner contacted to confirm the report was Bob Gracey of Indepen-

THE MEDIA

FOR WESTERN PBS VIEWERS, A FILM CREW
MAKES A STUDY OF INYO'S WATER ISSUE

Public Broadcasting System is turning its TV cameras on the California water problem, and one of its producers, Steve Fisher, is in the county from San Francisco interviewing officials, shooting up reels of film, and recording the hum of groundwater pumps.



STEVE FISHER
Shooting in "Eden"

He will put it all together in a 30-minute telecast that will be aired on PBS affiliates "sometime in January." He said the show will be carried "in the Western States," and that includes most every PBS outlet west of Colorado (12 in California) and from Mexico north to Canada. "Eden battles for water" is the title on the shooting script. Presenting their "sides" of the Inyo-DWP battle will be two of the feature principals in the conflict, District Attorney "Buck" Gibbons, and DWP's Duane Georgeson. Fisher says the

issue will be "clearly dealt with," and water problems east and west of the Sierras will be aired to show their interworkings.

LOCAL MEDIA CONTROVERSY

Meanwhile, a local media conflict - an offshoot of the greater water issue - has resulted in an FCC petition to deny the renewal of its broadcast license to Lone Pine's KINC.

The owners of KINC have responded to the filing, denying that the DWP put any pressure on the station to silence its newscasts last spring. The filing for denial was made by Eastern Sierra News Service which claimed KINC is unresponsive to community needs, a claim denied by the station owners in its answer to the ESNS petition. FCC has set no hearing date.

dence. Known for his silence outside the "official" statements of the planning commission meetings, Gracey expectedly added his own "No comment."

What will the commission do now, Gracey was asked, and he replied, "I have no idea at this point."

"Is the commission working with the district attorney on the Knight issue?"

"No comment," he said again, but then pointedly explained that the district attorney is the planning commission legal counsel. What Gracey did not point out, since there was little need to, was the fact that the district attorney is also legal counsel for the supervisors - a fact which might necessitate their turning to others, such as the attorney general.

FORUM

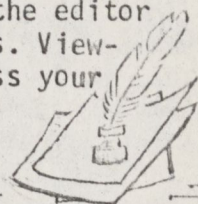
LETTERS AND COMMENT

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INYO COUNTY NEWS-LETTER

Nov. 14, 1977

The NEWS-LETTER welcomes letters and comments relevant to public issues, and will publish on its FORUM page those that the editor considers timely. Due to space considerations, letters should not exceed 200 words. Viewpoints concisely stated are those most likely to be chosen for publication. Address your statement to NEWS-LETTER, PO Box 531, Independence.



BISHOP'S TEEN-AGE MUGGER

"Common sense dictates that when a young boy mugs an elderly lady he deserves a good thrashing from his elders."

- Katherine Connable, Independence

THE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN: "NOT AN EFFECTIVE TOOL"

"This is one more reason why we need a good general plan; to identify areas where commercial growth could occur with the expectation of success."

"Our general plan is now very rudimentary, not an effective tool. A general plan deals in concepts and it takes citizen-input in each area to put it together. If the people are behind it to start with, then later problems don't involve personalities and questions of priorities. All those things (then) have already been hammered out."

"As it stands now, each year that goes by, the County General Plan does not conform to expectations of the law."

- Cindy O'Connor, Bishop
(President, League Of
Women Voters)

(Ms. O'Connor had been asked to comment on the proposed development at Bishop Airport.)

FISH, Continued

by foreigners - like what happened to the American Indians."

How effective is the poisoning program, which is costing taxpayers \$6000?

"The poison," answers Pister, "kills everything deader than heck."

But not humans, or, presumably, animals that drink from the river. Pister said the poison F&G is using - a concoction called Fintrol - is fed into the river at a ratio of 10 parts poison to a billion parts of water. It kills both Brown Trout and Goldens, but as Pister explains, the Goldens are first "stunned" by a kind of F&G shock treatment and removed from the river before the Browns are poisoned.

Pister said the department erected a barrier to keep the Brown Trout from the upper reaches of the river. "That's the Goldens' sanctuary, so to speak."

Elsewhere Fish and Game officials offered no ready explanation as to why they don't allow fishermen to "fish out" the upper Kern until it is rid of the unwanted Browns - a procedure that would make poisoning unnecessary and also give the anglers their sport. (Most fishermen appear quite happy to catch Brown Trout.)

And how did the Brown Trout, now so unwanted, come to be in the Kern River in the first place?

The Fish and Game Department put them there. It may take five years to correct the error.

NEWS-LETTER'S "COMPLIMENTARY" LIST

Again this week a number of new names have been added to NEWS-LETTER's mailing list, and some others removed. It is the editors' hope to acquaint everyone in the county with the "alternative" news coverage provided in NEWS-LETTER. Each week about 200 new names are added, and about that many removed. To be sure you receive NEWS-LETTER every week, mail in your subscription today and join our rapidly increasing number of regular readers.

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PHONE SERVICE

FOR TELEPHONE CUSTOMERS, AUTOMATION
AND BETTER SERVICE, BUT RATES THE SAME

Included with the monthly bad news was the good news: Most of the area's telephone customers will have better - and probably faster - service, starting about Dec. 15.

An enclosure in its regular billing discloses that Continental Telephone of California will inaugurate on that date a system in which one-party and two-party customers will be enabled to dial direct within this area without the operator coming on the line to get the calling number.

The same system will apply outside the 714 area, although the customer is advised by Continental's notice that it will be necessary to dial the number of the area called.

"All other procedures," says Continental, "will be the same as at present."

The new system will operate through a network of regular line and microwave tower arrangements recently completed in the area. In recent weeks, the company has been testing the new microwave tower at Independence which is a part of the system. Phone company spokesmen have said that additional "lines out" of the county will be a part of the improved service. At peak busy times Inyo callers have often experienced delays when calling to other areas due to busy circuits. They'll probably have fewer such problems with the opening of the new service.

Company officials hastened to explain that the new service - although reducing the need for operator-contact in direct dialing - will have no effect on rates. For many, that was the "bad news."

YOUTH CRIME, Continued

few little-known programs have already done more good than their small shares of publicity might indicate, this because of the very private nature of any program dealing with minors. Lee, for instance, is still working toward a lease he wants on the old "Deer Farm property" located on the Indian reservation north of Independence. So far, however, the Inter-Tribal Council has not answered Lee on his proposal. Lee would turn the attractive property into a juvenile home - not, as he is quick to emphasize, a "jail" or "detention" home.

For now, at least, even jail quarters would be welcome - quarters that segregate the youngsters from the older offenders. A plan to include juvenile facilities in the county's new jail expansion (See story, this issue) has been scratched for the lack of money. Sometimes, the probation department hires a guard to stay with a young prisoner in a motel room, there being no other place available.

And what are the alternatives to jail, even if one were available?

The county has settled (somewhat reluctantly it would seem when measured in terms of what it pays) on what it calls a "crisis resolution center." Located on a neighborhood street in Bishop, it is a big, rambling house occupied by "New Horizons," and those under its care.

New Horizons attempts to maintain the order and security of a "home atmosphere" and at the same time apply the psychological techniques far beyond the sophistication of the

average "home." Group therapy sessions that bring the youngster face-to-face with his folly - and with his potential - are the basis of what its director calls "reality therapy."

The home, which works with about a half dozen youngsters at any one time, is not entirely tax supported, and some youngsters "pay their own way."

Chet and Robin Erskine, along with a varying group of counsellors, operate the facility, and the Erskines say the home is an alternative to "the negative development into the court system and the essentially non-rehabilitative programs of correction."

Through peer group pressure and applied "reality therapy," the Erskines have seen some "dramatic changes" in some of the youth brought there. They stress personal responsibility.

In any case, the "youth crime problem" may eventually burn itself out, if for no other reason that "youth" itself is on the wane for the first time since the 40's. We live now with the "last" of the post-World War II babies - the sometimes spoiled "Spock generation." The nation, in short, is "getting older," and far fewer babies are coming along to become the young criminals of the next decade. Too, the legislatures are taking a harder position on the coddling of young criminals, some of whom now can be tried in the courts as adults.

But a nagging feeling remains not only among the social scientists, but also in the hearts of the parents: Until the family unit is strengthened and until it can set intelligent examples of behavior, the kids are probably going to remain in serious trouble.

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